

1191  
A-M

January 11, 1939.

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I dislike to burden you with such a memorandum as the appended immediately on your return but I think I should tell you very frankly that I consider this matter of consolidation one of primary importance not only for this Department but for our Government and the interests which it serves. It is a matter on which we must take a firm stand for, if consolidation is not carried through now, it will not be done for many years to come and the failure to do so will seriously affect our ability to carry through our conduct of our foreign relations in the field and in Washington, and the situation both in the field and in Washington will be much worse than it is now and has been for years. This opinion is based on a very thorough knowledge of the situation here and in the field and I would be failing in my duty if I did not emphasize at this time the fundamental importance of the matter.

I am under the impression that the President has  
told

told Secretary Hopkins he desires this consolidation carried through. Mr. Hopkins is receiving conflicting opinions from various sources. I do not know whether he has made up his own mind. It will depend very largely on the personal attitude taken by Mr. Hopkins whether the consolidation will be carried through. I am confident that, if the President and you will emphasize the importance of the matter to him, we shall have his full cooperation.

I had luncheon with Mr. Hopkins at his suggestion some time ago after which I wrote a memorandum addressed to Mr. Welles, which I append hereto, and which I think you will wish to read in spite of its length. I believe it is of primary importance that during one of your first conversations with the President you emphasize the importance of this matter being carried through. I may tell you that Senator Pittman and Mr. McReynolds, the Chairmen of the most important committees involved, are in favor of the consolidation and I believe that the considerable majority of the leading members of Congress are or will be in favor of it and the same holds true of the thoughtful business men of the country. The stage is all set for it being done. It would be a tremendous misfortune if it is not done. If this important step in the President's reorganization program is not carried through,

through, the reorganization bill might as well be abandoned, for the enemies of reorganization can point out that one of the most simple and at the same time most effective steps in Government reorganization is not being carried through.

I have put a tremendous amount of time and effort into preparing the way for this consolidation in Government circles, in the Foreign Services, and among business men, as well as among the press. I have done this as a matter not in the interests of a department but of our Government and the interests which it serves and as an indispensable step in the public interest in the times in which we are and which we have to face. The matter is now largely out of my hands and rests on the decision which the President, you, Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Wallace will take. I believe that the President and you are firm in your decision. Mr. Wallace will go along if the President desires it. It remains, therefore, a question of the decision of Mr. Hopkins.

G. S. Messersmith.

A-M: GSM: VNG